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# NASA Policy Directive

**NPD 1388.1**

Effective Date: May 21, 2012

Expiration Date: May 21, 2017

**COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY**[Printable Format \(PDF\)](#)

Request Notification of Change

 (NASA Only)

## **Subject: Employee Participation in NASA Education and Communications Activities**

**Responsible Office: Office of Education and Office of Communications**

### **1. POLICY**

a. It is NASA's policy to support and encourage employee participation in optional education and communications activities related to the Agency's mission as part of official duty activities. This includes NASA programs, projects, events, and activities that seek employee volunteers to engage, educate, or inspire audiences using technical or non-technical components of NASA's mission. This also includes select mission-related education and communications activities administered by NASA partners, collaborators, grantees, or other organizations. br>

### **2. APPLICABILITY**

a. This directive is applicable to NASA Headquarters and NASA Centers, including Component Facilities and Technical and Service Support Centers.

b. This language applies to JPL only to the extent specified or referenced in the appropriate contract.

c. In this directive, all mandatory actions (i.e., requirements) are denoted by statements containing the term "shall." The terms: "may" or "can" denote discretionary privilege or permission, "should" denotes a good practice and is recommended, but not required, "will" denotes expected outcome, and "are/is" denotes descriptive material.

d. In this directive, all document citations are assumed to be the latest version unless otherwise noted.

### **3. AUTHORITY**

51 U.S.C. § 20113, The National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, as amended.

### **4. APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS**

a. 31 U.S.C. §1353, Acceptance of Travel and Related Expenses from Non- Federal

## Sources.

- b. 5 C.F.R. Part (Pt.) 2635, Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch.
- c. 14 C.F.R. Part (Pt.) 1213, Release of Information to News and Information Media.
- d. NASA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Implementation Plan FY 2012- 2015 (March 16, 2012).

## 5. RESPONSIBILITY

a. The Associate Administrator for Education and the Associate Administrator for Communications have joint oversight for and shall collaborate on the implementation of this policy directive.

(1) The Associate Administrator for Education will ensure education activities support NASA's strategic goals for education.

(2) The Associate Administrator for Communications will ensure communications activities support NASA's strategic goals for communications.

b. The Associate Administrator for Education and the Associate Administrator for Communications will collaborate with the Associate Administrator for Diversity and Equal Opportunity and the Assistant Administrator for Human Capital Management to ensure employee participation in education and communications activities supports NASA's strategic goals for diversity and inclusion in accordance with the NASA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Implementation Plan.

c. The Headquarters Office of the General Counsel, in collaboration with the Centers' Office of Chief Counsel, is available to counsel participants who have legal questions regarding their participation in these activities, that may include, but are not limited to conflict of interest laws, ethics regulations, or Hatch Act restrictions.

d. Officials-In-Charge (OICs) of Headquarters Offices and Center Directors, or designees, may:

(1) Authorize a reasonable amount of official duty time for employees to participate in optional mission-related education and communications activities.

*Note: Civil service time charges for employee participation in education and communications activities can be assigned to the labor charge code the employee uses normally. However, Centers' local procedures apply.*

(2) Assign employees to participate in education and communications activities that are appropriately related to their official duties.

e. OICs of Headquarters Offices and Center Directors, or designees, will:

(1) Encourage and support employee participation in mission-related education and communications activities.

(2) Ensure that employees participating in education and communications activities comply with the provisions of this NPD.

(3) Jointly with the employee, ensure that employee participation in education and communications activities does not interfere with employees' primary job duties by discussing potential conflicts with the employee beforehand. Approval of employee participation denotes understanding/acceptance of potential conflicts identified by the employee (if any).

f. All employees are encouraged to participate in optional mission- related education and communications activities, based on an employee's interest in

such activities in accordance with this NPD. Employees shall:

- (1) Obtain advance supervisory approval to participate in education and communications activities; this includes identifying and notifying the supervisor of all potential conflicts created by participation.
- (2) Conduct themselves in a manner that represents NASA favorably.
- (3) Not engage in partisan political activities while participating in NASA education and communications activities or violate conflict of interest laws and ethics regulations.
- (4) Adhere to 14 C.F.R. Pt. 1213, Release of Information to News and Information Media, for any interactions with the media.
- (5) Not share non-public information as a result of their participation in these activities.
- (6) Not accept additional compensation from an outside organization.

*Note 1: Reimbursable travel that is properly accepted in accordance with 31 U.S.C. §1353, Acceptance of Travel and Related Expenses from Non-Federal Sources, does not constitute compensation.*

*Note 2: Employees are reminded that they are subject to the 5 C.F.R. Pt. 2635, Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, which includes rules for acceptance of gifts such as meals, tokens of appreciation, entertainment, or any item having monetary value. Employees are encouraged to contact an ethics attorney at their Center for any questions related to the acceptance of gifts from outside sources.*

g. Employees will:

- (1) Possess sufficient knowledge of the subject matter they will be sharing with external audiences.
- (2) Possess sufficient knowledge of how to appropriately interact with and engage target audiences.
- (3) Jointly with the supervisor, ensure that participation in education and communications activities does not interfere with the performance of their primary job duties by communicating any potential conflicts to the supervisor beforehand. Optional education and communications activities are in addition to the employee's regular job duties and are not a substitute for completing assigned work. Participation in such activities is not intended to have an adverse impact on work operations or employee performance.

## **6. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**

None.

## **7. MEASUREMENTS**

Headquarters Offices of Education and Communications shall assess compliance with this NPD by conducting qualitative assessments of employee participation in mission-related

education and communications activities with Headquarters OICs and Center Directors on a rotational basis every three years.

## **8. CANCELLATION**

None

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**/s/ Charles F. Bolden, Jr.**  
**Administrator**

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## **ATTACHMENT A: DEFINITIONS**

Education. Comprises those activities designed to enhance learning in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) content areas using NASA's unique capabilities.

Communications. Comprises the comprehensive set of functions necessary to effectively convey - and provide an understanding of - the program, its objectives and benefits to target audiences, the public, and other stakeholders. This includes a diverse, broad, and integrated set of efforts: media services, multimedia products and services (including Web, social media, and non-technical publications), and public engagement activities and events. These efforts are intended to promote interest and foster participation in NASA's endeavors and to develop exposure to - and appreciation for - STEM.

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